

TIPS FOR CHILDHOOD OBESITY: CHANGE AND PREVENTION

Thoughts to consider:

Our world now fosters eating more frequently with decreased opportunities in daily life to burn calories. Eating patterns in childhood can lead to chronic weight management problems in adulthood.

Overweight kids and teens often have negative self-esteem and which may adversely effect physical, social, academic, and athletic aspects of a child's life. These negative patterns are also carried into adulthood.

Obesity stimulates early physical maturation. It may be harder to help the pre-mature obese teen who has a negative self-image.

Health Risks Linked with Childhood Obesity:

- **altered growth with advanced bone age and early maturity
- **heart disease and high cholesterol
- **diabetes
- **high blood pressure
- **stroke
- **infertility
- **gallstones/gallbladder disease
- **sleep apnea
- **possibly some cancers

Ten Suggestions for Change:

1. Have fruits and vegetables available in your environment. Shape your child's consumption!
2. Limit beverages that compete with milk and water.
3. The more soda a child/teen drinks, the less calcium and phosphorus are absorbed in the bones. Don't have any soda in the fridge. Provide alternatives.
4. LIMIT all minimal nutritional value foods such as:
soda/carbonated beverages (no more than two 8 ounce servings per week)
sports drinks unless used for fluid and electrolyte replacement during competitive sports activities
each sugared drink/serving will make a child 60% more likely to be obese
sugared gum/candy/ ices/ popsicles
5. Remember that parental modeling of eating behaviors strongly effects the child's selection of foods.
6. Overweight children eat at a faster rate. If you eat faster, you will most likely eat more.
Eat slower. Teach your children to savor their food, chew thoroughly and don't rush through meals.
Sit down and eat at least one meal per day together as a family
7. Kids often reject new foods. If you repetitively offer (not force) new foods, new foods will be more likely to be accepted Don't give up! Perseverance is a valuable trait!
8. Don't use high fat energy dense foods as "rewards". This will only stimulate the desire for reward foods.
9. Overly stringent parental control can increase preference for high fat energy dense foods.
10. Overly stringent parental control can disrupt the child's ability to self-regulate intake based on the natural drives of hunger and satiety.

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